# Edmonton Street News

ESN

Volume 3 Issue 6,2006

Vendors pay 50 cents per paper

## City Agencies That Provide Meals

**Bissell Centre**
10527-96 Street 423-2285
Sunday 12:00 –1:30 p.m., sandwiches and snacks after church service
Monday to Thursday -
10:30 a.m. – sandwiches
Tuesday and Friday - noon – hot lunch for women
Friday 9:45 a.m. – sandwiches

**Christ Church** 12116-102 Avenue 488-1118
5:30 meal every 3rd Saturday of the month

**Herb Jamieson Centre** 10014-105A Avenue 429-3470
Only for men who are not on assistance. If on assistance, they must get permission form their worker
Monday to Friday – 7:00 to 7:45 breakfast
12:00 to 12:45 p.m. lunch
5:00 to 5:45 p.m. supper
Weekends 11:00 to 11:45 a.m. brunch
4:00 to 4:45 p.m. supper

**Edmonton Inner City Victory Church**
10665-98 Street
Friday 7:00 to 8:00 meal

**House of Refuge Mission**
10339-95 Street
Daily-8:00 p.m. meal

**J-Jirel Mission Soup Kitchen – East**
11905- 82 Street 489-9138
Wednesday and Sunday 4:00 p.m. meal

**J-Jireh Mission Soup Kitchen – west**
10137 – 150 Street 489-9138
Thursday – 4:00 p.m. meal
Sunday – 10:00 a.m. meal

**Lighthouse Ministries** 3010-119 Avenue
423-1277 or 474-8086
Wednesday and Sunday
1:00 and 7:00 p.m. meal

**Marian Centre**
10528-98 Street 424-3544
Daily except Wednesday
12:00 to 12:45 p.m. meal
Closed from the 27th of each month to re-open the 1st of next month

**Mustard Seed**
10636-96 Street
426-5600
Monday to Friday 7:00 to 8:00 supper
Zero tolerance of alcohol

**Operation Friendship**
9526-106 Avenue 429-2626
Monday to Friday - 9:00 a.m. breakfast
Monday to Sunday – 12:00 noon lunch
5:00 p.m. supper
for seniors 55 and over only

**Red Road Healing Society**
4225-118 Avenue 471-3220
Tuesday and Thursday – 5:00 p.m. meal
Friday – 12:00 to 1:00 soup and bannock

**River of Life Church**
11368-95 Street 479-6762
Thursday and Friday –
11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. lunch

**Robertson Wesley United Church**
10209 – 123 Street 482-1587
Second Saturday of each month –
5:00 p.m. meal

**Sai Sadan**
9619-101 Avenue upstairs
Wednesday – 6:00 p.m. meal

**Salvation Army**
9620-101A Avenue 242-9222
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday – 1:00 to 1:30 p.m. – back door bread program
Friday – 7:30 a.m. breakfast

**St. Peter's Lutheran Church**
9606 – 110 Avenue 426-1122
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday – 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. breakfast

**St. Faith's Anglican**
11725-93 Street – parish hall
477-5931
Thursday – 12;30 p.m. soup
Saturday - 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. breakfast
3rd Friday of the month – 7:00 supper

**Victory Café and Soup Bar**
13411- Fort Road
Monday – 5:30 to 6:45 meal

**Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre**
9611-101A Avenue 423-5302
Meals for women staying at the shelter. If not, a bag lunch is given.

**Edmonton Orthodox Reformed Church**
11610 – 95A St.
Worship Services 10AM & 6PM Sunday
Mondays 6:15 Youth Gym Night
Thursdays 6:15 Soup & Study – Free!
Info: Pete Wright – 479-1860
www.orcurc.org

Are you a new Mom? Do you need a break? Free emergency childcare offered for babies 0 – 2 years of age in loving supportive home. Pick up/drop off available. Call 966-6583 24 hours.

**JJAM** (Just Jesus and Me) 12 Step program for any addiction. 7:45 Mondays at E3C Church, 117 Avenue, 105 Street. Call 914-8761 for information.

### Wanted:

Warm winter clothing, jeans, running shoes, sleeping bags, blankets, and quilts for homeless people. Drop off your donations at the House of Refuge Mission at 10339-95 Street from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

# Editorial:

## Would you buy a used car from this prime minister?

Allan Sheppard

*Allan Sheppard is a freelance writer and editor, and a volunteer writer for Edmonton Street News. As a pensioner, he finds himself from time to time on the edge of poverty and homelessness. As a self-appointed community elder, he thinks and worries about the needs of children, youth, parents and others who face lives of poverty and inadequate education in the midst of unprecedented wealth.*

I spend a lot of time on the road in my elder years, travelling back and forth across the country by bus. It keeps me close to the ground and close to people—which can be a mixed blessing, but interesting.

On a recent stop in Saskatoon, I tuned my portable radio briefly to a radio call-in show that obviously catered to the right-wing edge of the political spectrum. (Doesn't it sometimes seem that all radio call-in shows cater to right-wingers?). The host and a self-confessed 37-year-old caller blew white-hot in their enthusiasm for Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

What the caller seemed to appreciate most—eagerly supported by the host—was the fact that Harper has delivered on his famous five campaign promises, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty having incorporated something for each of them in the budget announced on May 2. Never before in her lifetime, enthused the caller, has a politician actually kept his word on election promises.

I'm almost twice as old as the caller, and I can go even further: I can't recall a politician in my lifetime who appeared to deliver as quickly or fully on campaign promises. I could even give Harper points for that achievement; if you have read my previous contributions to the Street News, you will know that I was bitterly critical of former Prime Minister Paul Martin for his abysmal record on fulfilling his promises, especially to the poor.

But...

What, exactly, did Harper and his party promise? And what have they delivered?

Here are Harper's precious five campaign priorities as currently listed on his web site http://pm.gc.ca/eng/feature.asp?pageId=40) :

- Cleaning up government by enacting and enforcing the Federal Accountability Act;
- Lower taxes for working Canadians; starting by reducing the GST;
- Protecting Canadian families and communities by strengthening the justice system;
- Supporting parents' child care choices through direct assistance and by creating more daycare spaces; and
- Delivering the health care Canadians need, when they need it, by addressing the fiscal imbalance and establishing a patient wait times guarantee with the provinces.

The first priority seems to be under way in the Accountability Act—were it not for the fact that the act apparently includes access-to-information restrictions that would, for instance, have made it impossible to get enough information on the recent "Adscam" debacle to proceed with a meaningful enquiry (and which would protect the current and future governments from similar investigations). In any case, there is more still to come on that one.

As for the last three priorities they, too, are works in progress. There are many causes for concern among the poor who are waiting for possible benefits, but a lot of water has to flow under the bridge before we see any tangible results.

It is on the second priority that we have seen results in the budget, and they are not good for Canada's poor.

What does the budget promise? "Lower taxes for working Canadians." What does it deliver? An increase of .5 per cent above the reduced level set by the Martin government for 2005 on the first $30,000 or so of taxable income, and decreases for the two increments above that.

Now, I ask you: at which level do you think many, if not most, "working Canadians" pay their taxes? Well they all pay the increased rate on their first $30,000 or so. And some probably pay on income over $30,000, which would give them access to decreased taxes on the second increment. But how many of those are "working Canadians" as you or I might understand the term?

Harper's cleverly worded priority promises to offset any base-level tax increase "by reducing the GST." But dig deeper, and this is what you will find:

If your taxable income is $20,000, you will pay an additional $100 in tax next year. If you pay GST on purchases for half that income (remember, you do not pay GST on food, medicine and certain other items), you will save $100. The net gain: $0. It's really a zero-sum game for the low-income taxpayer, who should, in a kinder, gentler world, do better. And don't forget the inevitable reduction in the quarterly GST rebate paid to low-income taxpayers. At best, that will compensate for any biases in my calculations. At worst, it will reduce the income of poor Canadians even further.

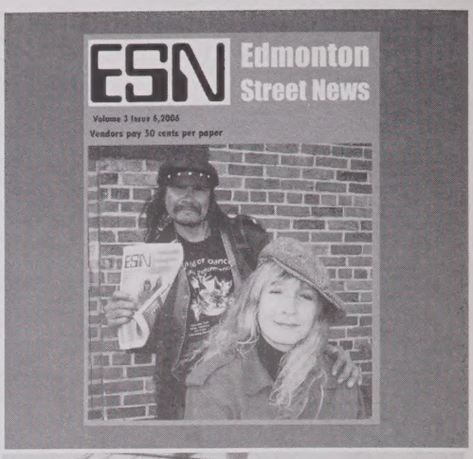
Let's be realistic. We are talking about peanuts here, even to the "working Canadian" who nets around $20,000 in taxable income. We are not talking about significant benefits. We are talking about symbolism.

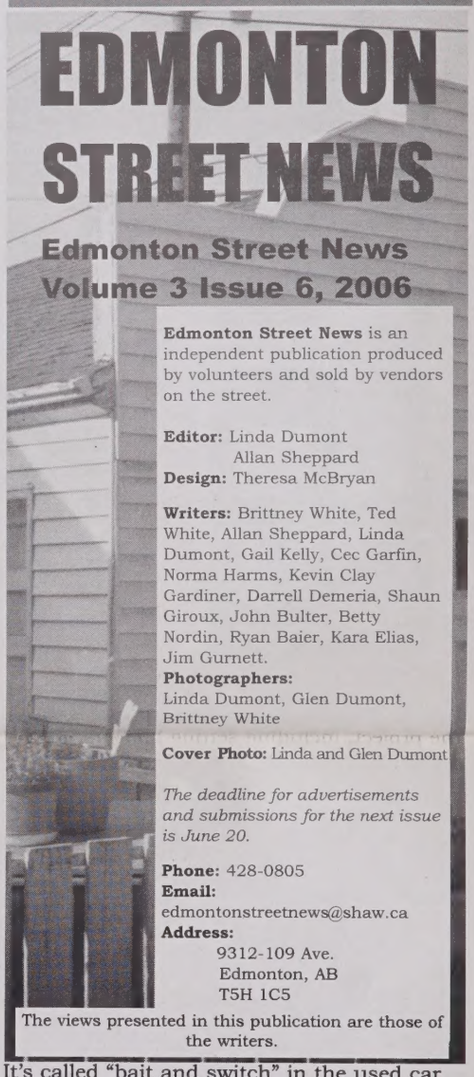
Symbolism is the essence and the only real purpose of Harper's five priorities. In this case the symbolism stinks for poor Canadians. So does the reality. Promise them anything, but give them as little as possible. It's called "bait and switch" in the used car business, where it is against the law. It's business as usual in federal politics. Paul Martin did it, to be sure. But Harper promised better.

Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.

And shame on all those radio talk show hosts and callers who cannot or will not look behind the smoke and mirrors that make it seem Steven Harper and his government are a sneak preview to the Second Coming.

Allan Sheppard




**Edmonton Street News** is an independent publication produced by volunteers and sold by vendors on the street.

**Editor:** Linda Dumont
Allan Sheppard
**Design:** Theresa McBryan

**Writers:** Brittney White, Ted White, Allan Sheppard, Linda Dumont, Gail Kelly, Cec Garfin, Norma Harms, Kevin Clay Gardiner, Darrell Demeria, Shaun Giroux, John Bulter, Betty Nordin, Ryan Baier, Kara Elias, Jim Gurnett.
**Photographers:**
Linda Dumont, Glen Dumont, Brittney White

**Cover Photo:** Linda and Glen Dumont

*The deadline for advertisements and submissions for the next issue is June 20.*

**Phone:** 428-0805
**Email:**
edmontonstreetnews@shaw.ca
**Address:**
9312-109 Ave.
Edmonton, AB
T5H 1C5

The views presented in this publication are those of the writers.

## *Memorial to be held at Holy Cross Cemetary June 15*

*Through every child, God lends His love.*
*We extend that love through the Spirit of Community.*

In January of this year, The Knox Metropolitan United Church honored Cookie Cook for the love and generosity that she gives her community. Cookie gives so much of her time and money to others that when her son Clayton died, she had no money left to buy him a grave marker. The Knox Metropolitan United Church arranged for the purchase and installation of a grave marker for Clayton.

A service will be held for Clayton Cook on Thursday, June 15, 2006 at the Holy Cross Cemetery. A lunch will be provided at the Knox Metropolitan Church on 109 street and 83 avenue, between 1:00 p.m. and 1:45 p.m. Rides will be available to the Holy Cross Cemetery for those accompanying Cookie to Clayton's grave side service. Use of a small bus or van and driver would be welcome as well as donations of socks to distribute to those in need.

As many of us have friends and family who are buried at the Holy Cross Cemetery, Pastor Linda Gow will say a few words on their behalf as well. After the service, we will all have 15 minutes to visit the graves of others who rest nearby. Please provide the names of others to be prayed for, prior to the date of the service, by calling Gail at 433-2229.

# New cooperative housing project provides housing for low-income families and singles

By Edmonton Housing Trust fund

Providing a sense of community and support to allow low-income working families and individuals to become self-sufficient was the driving force behind a collaborative housing effort that opened May 27, 2006. The once vacant boarded up building will now be known as the Cameron Avenue Cohousing Cooperative and will be home to 14 households.

The $2.5 million project, located at 10033-95 Street was initiated by the Communitas Group, a private Alberta based corporation. The Edmonton Housing Trust Fund, through funding from the governments of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) provided a financial contribution of $1.5 million to the project. Additional funding of $240,000 was provided under CMHC's Residential Rehabilitation Program (RRAP).

"Projects such as the Cameron Manor Cohousing Cooperative help to improve the health and well-being of Edmonton families," said Peter Goldring, MP for Edmonton East. "We are proud to collaborate on such projects with community organizations that are working to help families achieve clean, secure, affordable housing."

The building contains 14 apartment units featuring 11, two-bedroom and three, one bedroom units. The building also contains a large community facility known as the Common House that provides a social/meeting area complete with a kitchen and recreational spaces for both children and adults.

In a cohousing community the members pool both their human and financial resources to provide themselves and their families with goods and services that they would not be able to access on their own. They form a board and with participation from all members they manage all aspects of the project, including setting budgets, making policy, establishing bylaws and monthly fees.

"Ensuring housing for all Edmontonians is a city priority," said Councillor Michael Phair of Ward 4. "I am particularly pleased with the Cameron Avenue Cohousing Cooperative as there is an opportunity for both singles and families."

"City Council's annual contribution to the Edmonton Chousing Trust fund enables projects like the Cameron Avenue Cohousing Cooperative to empower low-income, working families and individuals to become self-sufficient. Edmonton's greatest need for affordable housing is for rental units for single person households. This welcome project will contribute to that need," said Councillor Karen Libovici of Ward 1.

A two-bedroom suite will rent for $575 and a one-bedroom unit will rent for $480.

# Renewing the Flophouse

Sent in by Jim Gurnett

The New York Times (April 30, 2006, A30) carried a story about the efforts of Rosanne Haggerty, founder of Common Ground Community in New York City, to "reinvent" an old flophouse hotel located deep in the Bowery.

The Andrews House is a 97-year-old lodging house or "cubicle hotel" that for several decades has served the housing needs of aging men, who otherwise likely would be homeless. Haggerty intends to renew Andrews House to provide what she calls "first step" housing for persons who have rejected other housing options for a life on the street. She said, "We want to get people now alienated from the idea of living in housing to enter in on their own terms, and then work with them from there."

Now there is a novel idea. Give people what they want!

Where did Haggerty get her idea about redeveloping Andrews House as a first-rate, high-quality, well-managed, new sort of "flophouse"? From the people who might become her tenants.

Common Ground conducted over 100 face-to-face interviews with people whom they met in soup kitchens and shelters. The purpose of the interviews was to discover what homeless people were looking for in housing.

The answers that came back were clear and simple. - Something small. Something private. Something safe. Something cheap. Something anonymous.

Then Common Ground went further. Homeless persons were invited to focus groups to help design the units.

Haggerty has concluded from her worldwide research that the size of the unit is not as important as the design of the space available and the context of the space's location. In other words, what additional amenities are nearby?

When the renovation is complete, the new Andrews House will house 146 residents. The forty-six men who currently reside in the building will be allowed to move back in and stay as long as they like, no questions asked. New residents will pay $7 per night and after three weeks will be required to get involved in services related to finding permanent housing. I love the approach Common Ground is taking. Often service providers make assumptions about what people need and want. Key truth to remember: Middle class goals don't necessarily translate to success in addressing life challenges for everyone! The ability to listen, really listen to people is an important step in the right direction if our desire is to solve problems, while partnering to make life better for low-income persons.

[Read the entire article at:

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/30/nyregion/30flop.html?ex=1146715200&en=30a7775d3de8134c&ei=5087%0A]

# Coffeehouse Meeting News

At the last Coffeehouse Council Meeting, a letter of appreciation to the churches who host Strathcona's Coffeehouse Meetings was reviewed and, after reflecting on it for two days, was approved and signed (two members were not available for the signing.) The council decided that the letter will be given to each individual church as well as be printed in this edition of Edmonton Street News.

It was also decided to launch a Safe Sex pilot project campaign that will be headed up by Cookie and Bea. The project involves a product called "Condom on a Stick" that includes a sucker, condom, and a moment of comedy.

Topics to be discussed at the next meeting include hosting a family dance, forming a printing service/training collective, finalizing plans for the bagged lunch project for people without homes, and review the future of the Coffeehouse Meetings.

**Letter to the Faith Group**

Coffeehouse Council Communications,
Strathcona
General Post Office
Bissell Street Community Coop
10527-96 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
April 29, 2006

Dear Strathcona Faith Group,

Re: Coffeehouse Meetings

We, the Coffeehouse Council wish to extend our sincere appreciation to you for hosting the monthly Coffeehouse Meetings. Many of us who attend the Coffeehouse Meetings live along the boundary line that separates the homeless from the housed. We are grateful that in Strathcona, although the boundary line may separate us, it does not divide us. We are all stakeholders in issues concerning homelessness.

We thank you for exhibiting the teachings of your faith - respecting the dignity and suffering of others, as well as acknowledging the importance of having a night out with friends and family. We learn from the goodness and grace of the Strathcona community.

It is our sincere desire that the community can find our stories and life experiences helpful as well.

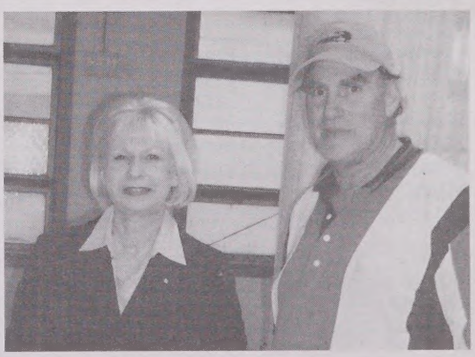
The sense of belonging and membership that we feel towards the community of our supporters reminds us that community is sometimes made up of the most unlikely members, from different places and experiences. In Strathcona, the poor, the pastors, and supporters commune. Together we grow stronger in both number and diversity. Our extended reach goes beyond what any single one of us can accomplish alone.

Your love and support gives us a stronger faith in the power of community, ourselves, and in God.

With deepest regards and appreciation from the Coffeehouse Council, Strathcona

by Gail Kelly

More coffe house on page 7



Annette Goldring and Cecil Garfin

**My Canada**
*By Cecil Garfin*
*Category: My Canada*
*Sponsor: Peter Goldring MP*

More than the red and white with a maple leaf
The land of prosperity and peace,
Wide open spaces, forests with lots of trees,
Birds, beavers, bears and bees.

Majestic mountains and many lakes
Mostly free from serious earth quakes,
Welcomes people from all nations
With other countries has great relations.

Most people that are helpful share and care
To be any other way, they wouldn't dare.
A land with many opportunities for everyone
A great place to be when all is said and done.

More Poetry night page 4

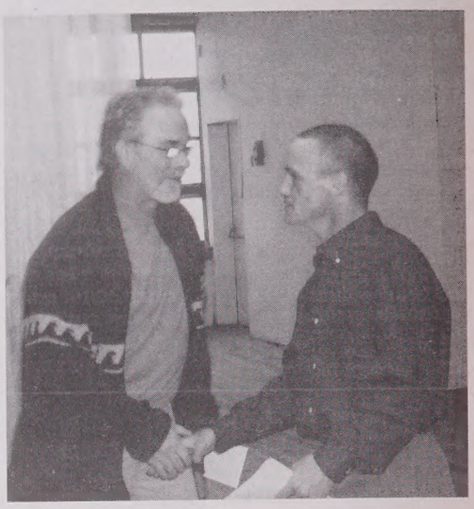
# Touched by the Power of Poetry

Percy Bysshe Shelley, a romantic poet, once was quoted as saying, "Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar." Poetry from the Unknown, the wrap up of the Edmonton Street News poetry contest, was a night not to be forgotten. Throughout the night I could feel the pure and utmost raw emotion from the many poets. The energy engaged through the audience touched each and every person in a multitude of ways. Tears dripped down cheeks, smiles touched the heart and even patience, comfort and values were stretched and challenged to bend in ways unexpected.

Poetry has the power to ignite a spirit as it is rooted in emotion once felt or sought after; the humanness of the words crafted together in individual artistic ways is uplifting. There is no one without the power to create a poem. How do you feel? - Angry, happy, sad, let down, blissful? Expand – that's poetry - say it in any which way you want- in any style, direction, rhyme, font, rhythm – it's yours – it's unique – it captivates your own freedom. So spill it – say it – feel it – be it – if only for a moment – let yourself be free!

Thanks to all those who supported the poetry night. Thanks to sponsors, donors and those who chose, if only for a moment, to let themselves just BE.

By Brittney White



Michael Dunn and Darrell Demeria

Linda Dumont and Betty Nordin

## Growling

*By Betty Nordin*
*Category: Survival on the Street*
*Sponsor: Edmonton Street News*

Finally I got a decent sleep last night.
I tucked myself in these bushes that helped
to keep the wind and cold out.
A person could fix this up
to be quite comfortable
Just spread a few spruce boughs
on the ground
Then put my sleeping bag on top.
Now I'm ready to have some more sleep.

Waking with a start
I hear growling
I don't know where it is coming from
So I'll just turn over
And get some more sleep.
There it is again!
Now I realize it is my stomach growling.
It has been a while since I ate
So now my stomach
Is growling at me.

Not having a home is for the birds.
They even have their own nest
So they can sing to the world
How happy they are.
There it is again
Still growling at me.
In frustration I holler at my stomach
"Stop growling!
I'll feed you when I can."
I sit up and think
Being homeless is a hard life
Every day you're picking bottles,
Standing in soup lines,
Eating stale bread,
Sleeping wherever you can find a place,
Not always being able to shower,
Your clothes are so dirty they are ready
To fall off.
At times you smell so bad
People walk away in disgust.

Hey stomach!
I'll feed you when I can
So stop growling.

## Opportunities Knocking

*by Darrell Demeria*
*Category: Education*
*Sponsor: Michael Dunn*

I hear this knocking and I say hello,
Nobody answers, so I go for the door,
Nobody's there, but I can't turn away,
It's like this always, day after day.

I got up this morning and went to work,
A little groggy, with a dirty shirt,
Along the way I was offered a job,
I should have taken it, where's my God.

Just like the calm before the storm,
I wish it would change, it never does,
It's always calm, it never shakes,
Everything in life seems so fake.

Here it is, another chance,
To make amends, and grab a prize,
My head is down, I'm working hard,
...And I hear this knocking at my door.

## Newcomers in Canada

*By Norma Harms*
*Category: Welcoming Newcomers*
*Sponsor: Mennonite Centre for Newcomers*

What is it like to come to Canada?
A newcomer from a foreign land,
What is it like to land in Canada
When your native language is Chinese,
Japanese or Russian?

What is it like to land in Canada?
Where you can hardly speak a word of
English
And you eat food that most Canadians
Do not like...

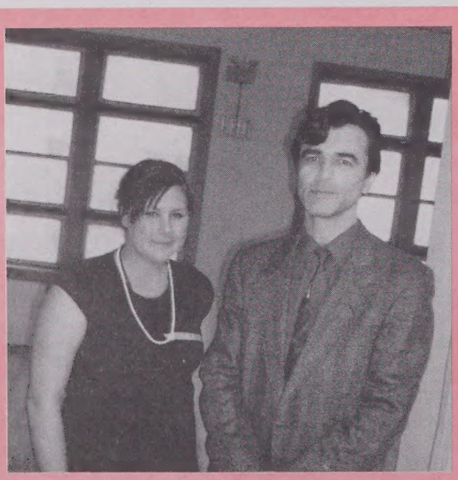
What is it like to come to Canada?
Where your degrees in Engineering Medicine,
Teaching or Nursing
No longer count?
And you have to start working your way up
from the bottom
Go back to university or college all over
again?

What is it like to land in Canada?
And feel like a newcomer in a foreign land
When you have left family members and
friends
Behind in a foreign land

What is it like to come to Canada?
It is like you do not belong here
And most of the time you feel
Lonely and just want to go back...

However, it is like being a pioneer
Where you just keep pressing forward
And for most newcomers
Leaving behind a land of dictatorship
War and turmoil and trouble

To come to a new land called Canada
To live in what newcomers call their promised land
Of democracy and freedom and hope for a
brighter tomorrow



Brittney White and Kevin Clay Gardner

## *System Error*

*By Kevin Clay Gardner*
*Category: Freedom*
*Sponsor: Brittney White*

The way the system doesn't work is such an awful shame,
The people who maintain it play it like some bloody game,
The lawyers claim they only want to help those who hold grudges,
But when they tire of taking sides, they choose to become judges,
Believing they're so infallible, then pretending to be so surprised
When it seems they only help themselves, then pretending to be so surprised
When outraged people find the courage to tell them that they're not.
Even though they claim to be impartial, they've already been bought.
What business do they have in saying this country is free?
When no one ever asked if what they do is right by me?
If leadership depends on nothing more than blind submission,
How can this dream of everlasting peace come to fruition?
If the system ends up just promoting legalized extortion?
Of course, the ones who make the law will claim an unfair portion,
While all the rest will bitch and moan for more cheese with their whine.
The rich will claim what's theirs is theirs, so why is mine not mine
What authorities that I've approached don't seem to understand,
Is that in order to have justice, law and truth go hand in hand.
But the lawyers and judges transformed the law into a base commodity
To protect themselves from those they wrong and those who disagree,
Presuming guilt by ignoring facts is not allowed in court
But in my life were some that lied like it was such great sport.
And I didn't have the time or money to speak in my own defense,
That's what I mean when I say the system makes no sense.

***The First annual Edmonton Street News poetry contest celebrated poets at an awards night May 12 at the Red Strap Art Market where first place poets in each of 11 categories read their poems and were presented with cash prizes of $50 from sponsors. Poetry from the contest will be included in a poetry book to be sold by street newspaper vendors. Look for the book to be on the street by the end of June. If you are unable to find a vendor, copies can be purchased directly from Edmonton Street News. Call 428-0805.***

Mary Jane Buchanen and Shaun Giroux

## A Crust

*By Shaun Giroux*

*Category: Daily Bread*
*Sponsor: Edie Carruthers Club*

Give us this day our daily bread
Its seems so odd to say when all is said and done
of all things this would be a plea we send to God -
To plea for cake or steak might be a thing to do
But bread I think is just our due.

Give us this day and our daily toil
I ought to say while changing my car oil.
I'd time to pray, give me my daily sweat,
My bruised and sore body has not given up yet.

So that bread I may get to toil for more
Give me my daily breath.
Drudging on I cry through half a sob,
until we meet our untimely death
No more work, yaaa. It will end my job.
A crust shall be my award
I shout in dread,
Grant unto me, my Lord, my daily bread

## What Home Means to Me

*By Ryan Baier*
*Category: What Having a Home Means to Me*
*Sponsor: Edmonton Housing Trust Fund*

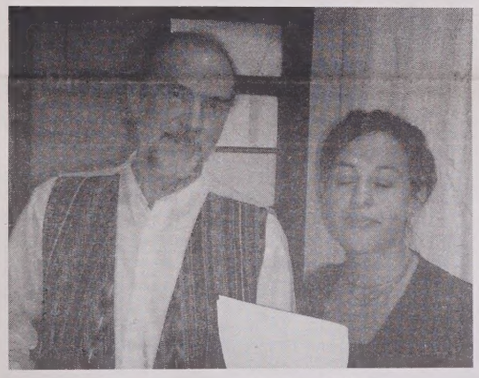
Having a warm bed and safe place to lay my head, I don't have to worry anymore about living in a men's dorm. Or standing in a soup line, at breakfast lunch and dinner time, now I can eat whatever I like, and if I get in late- there is still always food to eat.Having a home means I feel secure,with a cat on the couch - not having to put up with guys who want to fight or steal. A quiet space to read and write, no more worries late at night - having a home means I know the-door is locked, and I don't have to hide my valuables because this home is safe and sound. Having a home has given me peace profound.

## Faith

*By Ryan Baier*
*Category: Faith*
*Sponsor: Inner city Pastoral Ministry*

When the path we walk seems uphill, and friendsare far away, keep going.When you are tired and lonely, with no one to talk to, close your eyes and ask for strength.When the night is dark and troubles surround you, remember that you are never alone.When people give up on you, or do you wrong, ask for guidance.The journeys we walk in life are not always easy, but there is much to learn from both good and bad times. Compassion, wisdom, love and understanding are a few good qualities life graces us with. Faith is the strength and hope to keep going,no matter how hard it gets, always knowing there is someone who cares.

Margaret Dewhurst and Ryan Baier



Jim Gurnet and Kara Elias

## De La Nada

*By Kara Elias*

*Category: Homelessness*

*Spnsor: Edmonton Joint Planning Commission on Housing and Homelessness*

Rico en la nada
Hermoso en el polvo

Amigo de la lata
amigo de mi alma

Poder an la falta
Aire de la gente

Amigo de la lata
amigo de mi alma

Presencia en el vacío
Rey de la pobreza

Amigo de la lata
amigo de mi alma

Brillo en el tesoro
Secreto de la tierra

Tu, amigo de la lata,
amigo de mi alma
sabes bien cómo vivir
en plena cada momento

## Steps

By Kara Elias
*Category: The Power of Music*
*Sponsor: Homefest – Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homelessness*

Hear it? Listen.

To the anticipated first steps of a baby,
to the distant steps of a child soldier.
To the reverberating steps of the healthy,
to the fading steps of AIDS victims.

To the excited steps of newly weds,
to the fearful steps of refugees.

To the governing steps of the select,
to the silenced steps of many.

To the determined steps of the wealthy,
to the unsure steps of the homeless.

Hear it? Listen.
It's the people,
The music of society.
A constant note.
Connection. Rythym.
Life.

The law and truth should go together like a fork and knife
Because they don't, the legal system helped destroy my life.
But the last thing the legal system wants is lasting peace
When it seems they do their utmost just to do their very least.
It's hard to comprehend this senseless, sickening blood-thirst
Of those who claim they know what's best, then do their very worst.
But the power hungry hardly ever consider what they've done wrong
Assuming that they're right till someone smarter comes a long.
If overseers of the system are incapable of error,
Then why does so much proof exist of how they're so unfair?
To jump to a conclusion is too common a compulsion
Denying facts is an immature trait that fills me with revulsion.
Why anyone would think he has the right to waste my time
Is beyond my comprehension, and most especially when it's a crime.
To never admit you did something wrong just to make yourself look good
Is the reason why so many have often been misunderstood.
To believe they're infallible is to perpetuate a lie
And the huge mistakes that the system makes just make me want to cry.
When the ones in charge made past mistakes the poor were the ones who paid,
The rich could afford to have someone clean the messes they made.
And it seems the same mistakes keep getting made again and again.
Oh, occasionally the rich have paid, but only now and then,
Until such time as the one returns who is the wisest of the wise;
The one who can prove that he saw the light of God with his own two eyes.

Steve Berg and John Butler

**Looking For a Pair of Boots**
*By John Butler*
*Category: What gives Me Hope*
*Sponsor: Hope Mission*

I am on 96th street again
Down on my luck
Facing life on the skid.
There are places to get a bowl of soup
Maybe a ham sandwich
Or an old pair of boots;
Scuffed up but with a couple of months left in them.
A cup of coffee would be good.

There are so many tall buildings
When you're down on the skid.
They cast their shadows so cold and long as I call for the sun.
I'm not saying I don't see the light -
I saw it on a child's face
As she dished out my soup.
I know the light filters through
But at times the buildings are so tall and I am so small.

On the skid everyone is your best friend and your worst enemy.
I heard talk of work today.
I always keep my ear close to the ground on these days.
There is a church that might be giving out boots today.
Think I'll make my way down to church road.

# Letter to MLA Ed Stelmach

*The author of this letter to MLA Ed Stelmach likes to share his views with the honourable ladies and gentlemen of the Alberta Cabinet but most of the action now is with the race to replace Ralph Klein so this letter goes instead to a former cabinet minister who is one of those in the race. Watch for further letter in future issues of ESN*

Dear Ed,

I'm not sure if it's a good idea to write you or not Ed. Last month I got pretty excited about the idea of young Preston Manning as premier and sent along some advice to him and now he's decided the Holy Spirit would rather have him running a think tank than leading our province. So maybe it's better if I just keep quiet. But I don't like to miss a chance to give you the common man's view of what's going on, to help you during the months ahead.

Until Preston's brief flirtation with us you were my man and if he's not going to be in the race, then it's easy to return to cheering for you. I'm pleased to see how you're managing to stay below the radar with the lazy leftists in the media. Their lack of interest in you is a blessing you should thank the Lord for every day. At the slightest excuse the rest of those guys-- Dinning, Norris, Hancock, Oberg, Morton--are lined up slobbering for a chance to get their names in the paper. All the more chance for them to say something to offend one group or another I figure.

For some strange reason, we've got a bit of an inferiority complex here in Alberta and we're a little cautious about some young Turk who's got a fancy opinion and position on every issue that comes along. We get nervous about guys that seem too smart by half. We've demonstrated over the past decade or so that we favour someone who's not too bright. With these fellows running against you I think we're going to see the truth of the proverb about "Give a man enough rope...." and the field will be cleared out quite a bit once they've had a few weeks to shoot themselves in the foot. Lyle Oberg's already off to a great start and the others will soon follow suit.

But you've never been a spotlight chaser and that's going to serve you well. You're a nice guy, not pushy, good safe credentials on the hospital board and 4H, innocuous stuff. I think all you've got to do is connect with the ordinary folks who aren't too sure about hot shot lawyers and doctors and academics and businessmen who go into politics. If there's no one else available they don't have any choice. But Ed, you are the man who gives them a choice. You are the sort of guy you'd stop and talk with for a few minutes on the sidewalk when you go into town to pick up the mail or a part for the swather. You are the sort of guy you know won't let a lot of modern ideas destroy those good old ways and values that have served us well ever since your grandpa was homesteading your place back in 1898.

There's a heck of lot of people out there who want exactly that in a premier. We saw it when Ralph was running behind Nancy Betkowski in '92 and a lot of us suddenly realized we could end up with some uptown lady as premier and got our rears in gear to make sure it didn't happen. I'm positive you can pull it off again. It doesn't matter how many of the little gang that go to all the tuxedo galas in the big hotels and saunter about the links at fancy private golf clubs on summer afternoons, when the rest of us are hard at work in the shop or in the fields, might like one of your competitors. If you can get local people, who are trusted, out flogging memberships in your name, you can take it. You've managed more than a dozen years in the Legislature, four cabinet jobs, and still almost no one could name one thing you've accomplished. That's a profile that's custom made for leadership in Alberta.

I hope you've got a few key movers and shakers in rural Alberta on side with you too. Ralph never would have made it without Marv Moore and Steve West and Kenny Kowalski and Peter Trynchy out calling in their assorted debts and leaving an informal icing of vague promises and threats in the right places. Sure I know you've been around pretty well everywhere and have lots of your own connections. But there's a part of the job that's a little more shadowy and you need to leave that in other hands, a little distanced from you personally. You just keep being Mr. Nice Guy.

So, keep your spirits up Ed. Don't get spooked just because those other guys are getting a lot of ink in the papers. There's a bit of mythology about Ralph now, after a dozen years of him in the top job, but for most Albertans when he started in the race his years as mayor in Calgary were mostly forgotten and his undistinguished career in the Legislature was remarkable for nothing much besides the middle finger salute he gave the environmentalists at a news conference one day. As for speeches, he couldn't string five coherent sentences together that made sense. No, he ended up as premier as a triumph of mediocrity and the right people knowing that in the end it's how many votes you get that wins, not how many dramatic headlines you've had.

Ed, those votes from nobodies in every little forgotten corner of Alberta will count just as much this fall as the CEOs from the big office towers-- and a lot of those little people can get more wives and sons and neighbours out to vote than any of those guys who hang out with the same elite circle in the board rooms and the private fishing lodges.

My advice-- stay the course, let the rest of them chase the reporters, keep selling memberships one at a time until you've got it in the bag. Oh, and if you could somehow get a bit of an endorsement from Preston that would be pretty useful too....

Good luck

Ted White


**Hugh MacDonald, MLA**
**Edmonton-Gold Bar**
Edmonton Gold Bar Constituency Office
#102, 7024 -101 Avenue, NW
Edmonton, Alberta, T6A 0H7
Tel: 414-1015 Fax: 414-1017
e-mail:hugh.macdonald@assembly.ab.ca
website: www.liberalopposition.com

**PETER GOLDRING**
**Member of Parliament**
**Edmonton East**

**Justice Reform, Finally**

The federal Conservative Party has proposed the following reforms to our system of criminal justice: those convicted of serious crimes will be incarcerated for longer periods, and people convicted of serious crimes will no longer be eligible for conditional sentences or house arrest. With respect to serious crimes involving firearms, such as attempted murder, sexual assault, kidnapping, robbery and extortion, there will be automatic jail terms of three to ten years, depending on whether the crime involves a first-time offender or a serious, repeat offender. Other aggravating factors include whether the crime committed involved organized crime or street gangs. Crimes where there will be mandatory jail time include serious violent and sexual offences, manslaughter, impaired driving causing death and crimes punishable by jail terms of 10 years or more.

For too long, it seems, the reform of the offender, accompanied by some particularly charitable views as to how such reform might be achieved, has been the focus of much judicial discretion in sentencing. The harm that the offender's actions has caused others is frequently a secondary consideration. Raising the bar of deterrence will hopefully help to lower the number of offenders, plus assure the public that sentencing is consistent with the seriousness of the crime.

The Conservative actions are supported, across party lines. For example, Ontario Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty said that he was "encouraged" by the legislation, which he described as "a good example of what we can accomplish when we bring a principles-based approach to a challenge before us, find common ground and then work together toward a solution". In my view, the Conservative government is admirably responding to public concerns that larger social interests, referenced to denunciation and deterrence of serious criminal behaviours, must now be a primary focus in sentencing. What is your view?

**495-3261 www.petergoldring.ca**

# Community Shares the Spirit of Success at Coffeehouse Meeting

On Wednesday, May 10, at the Coffeehouse Meeting, Diane Wood and Chris Robillard were honored by the Trinity Lutheran Church for their personal development. Added together they had been homeless for three decades. Recently, they sobered up, moved into a home, and are both employed part time.

This article is the first part of a two part report. Part two in the next issue will speak about Chris.

Diane is starting up a beadwork micro-business, a skill that she and her seventeen-year-old enjoy doing together. Beading at home with her daughter helps Diane stay home to hang with her kids and to make money. Like most of us, Diane is happiest when she is productive and with people she cares about. She knows that love and productivity must both carry over to make the transition to a home both meaningful and enduring.

Many people stay on the streets because the people who love and support them are there. In this way, the street can become both home and community. It can be hard to leave. The move from the street to a house is jeopardized if it cuts people off from community without another community rising up from the void. Having no community is both the cause and effect of isolation. Thus, the healthy choice for people, who experience isolation after leaving the street, can mean returning to the streets where they reconnect with community.

That's what Diane did the morning of the Coffeehouse celebration. She was at the new Bissell Centre Drop In, bent over a stainless steel sink, wrapping a towel around her dripping wet hair.

"Welcome to my 'hood," she greeted me. Her eyes sparkled and went round, as she let out a happy, yet forewarning, "Ohhh!," followed by, "I was drinking wine last night. I slept outside."

We made our way out of the Bissell, where a few people were dancing to music. As we took our places in the sun, I watched Diane laugh and joke with her friends, and wondered if she would be at the celebration that night to receive her award for the positive personal changes she has made. Not drinking and getting a home with a bed to sleep in are two of the reasons that she was being rewarded. The victory celebration was beginning to look a bit sketchy, so I asked her, "Do you know what you want to do today?"

"I want to be happy," she grinned. "Come, I'll show you where my dentist is."

Diane is a natural social worker – working from the bottom-up. She contributes to her community through a willingness to be a member but also through her keen understanding of social structures. She makes it a habit to know useful things, gets to know the people doing good work, and consistently connects them together. Diane introduced me to the editor of this paper, the area's outreach worker, the supervisor at the Bissell, neighborhood pastors, church supporters, news reporters, security guards at the Farmer's Market, and so on. Her interest in community has long been evident. When her children attended a community-collective daycare, at the Bissell Community Center, she stayed nearby, either beading, taking cooking classes, or visiting with friends while her children learned-through-play. But when Diane's children became school-aged, her reason for going to the Bissell stopped and she dropped out of sight.

About four years ago, Diane started showing up at the Bissell again, hanging around the outside of the building. Staff coaxed her to come inside and she was back in community again. Around the same time, I had saved up some bottles for Diane for

recycling. A dozen times, I asked her if she would like to come to my house, a few blocks away, to retrieve them. She hesitated to come to the door, feeling a sensitivity that the community did not welcome her in, despite her purpose or intention. Ever since, I have asked the question, "How can society expect people to want to be community members if they make them feel unwelcome?" She finally felt comfortable enough to come in and retrieve her own bottles from the kitchen cupboard. Eventually she would stay and chat. She talked about her past schooling, her kids, and the grades they were going into, but nothing more of the future.

When the churches in the area got actively involved with the homeless population, Diane started to do beadwork at a church and to make dream catchers. She started to plan and set short-term goals, one being to keep in mind the days of the week so she would not miss her chance to bead.

Consider what this means. First, consider that people who live on the streets have few reasons to know what day of the week it is, and setting goals can seem too futile to bother with. Setting goals or mentally sequencing days, numbers, or beads, exercise a different part of the brain (pre-frontal/temporal lobes) than street-life requires. The parts of the brain that street-life develops have more to do with instinct, emotionality, and survival skills (sub-cortical). People who live on the streets and people who plan each minute of their waking lives develop different parts of the brain. Neither way is better, just specific to the environment. The 'change of mind' is an adaptive skill. It is crucial for service workers to appreciate what type of neurological development is attached to activities, so programs can be developed to better prepare people for the move off the street.

Church and community activities, local newspapers, casual employment services, and social services, all play a role in helping people make the move from the street to the home. Making dream catchers, or even selling this newspaper, is a critical first step to a more successful move into a society that is overwhelmed by schedules and agendas, and littered with far too many useless complexities or befuddled priorities. Indeed, half of the Coffeehouse award recipients were selling newspapers at the time they left the streets.

In the past four years, Diane has reconnected with a network of communities and supporters, including her children. A couple years ago, she took her son back to the Bissell to reconnect him with a special childhood daycare worker. He soon started to teach there, giving back the time and learning that was first given to him. He shares the same respect for community that his mother has. He has grown up to be a pillar of support for his family, peers, and students. Barely in his twenties, he holds downs three jobs and is an internationally competitive hip-hop dancer. Diane now visits a drop-in that is near her new house and has popped into the nearby K.I.S. club too, where she runs into old friends, now clean and sober, or working very hard at it.

Diane never did show up for her award that night and that was fine. You don't need to see the glue that binds to know it is there. Without the distraction of Diane's presence, the girls – Kathy from the faith group, news editor Linda Dumont, Pastor Linda Gow, Merriam who knows the street, and me - tossed around some action-plan ideas and new directions that we envision as important to our community.

Through events and scheduled meetings such as the Coffeehouse Meetings, the Coffeehouse Council meetings, and the AGM for people without homes, the Strathcona community, both housed and homeless, are taking the time to get to know one another. We have come to realize that we cannot help one another, or understand, if we do not come to the same table and talk. Coming together and sharing our storied lives gives us all an opportunity to think in new ways, learn to be responsible community members, and recognize that inclusion includes shared struggles. It is through collective struggles that we find collective resolves. This is the function that is community.

by Gail Kelly

*Available now, condo style shelter for the homeless. Each unit contains enough living space to shelter one to three people and features a skylight roof opening, as well as custom décor in a variety of styles. Tenants can choose from milk carton, paper, newspapers or cardboard for their bin design. These units are grouped for safety and community. Warning – tenants must have good hearing so they can hear the back up bells on the recycling trucks. One woman in Calgary was compacted when she refused to respond to the back up warning and an Edmonto couple were dumped onto the ground.*

# Painting Pictures of Reality: iHuman and Continuing Success

There are lies and dissention in the world – we all get this - and hate to be personally reminded. All things oppose themselves with an equally forceful nemesis. In the depths of creation also lies truth, pure untouched beauty and hope.

However the greatest challenge in life is to be aware of choice and to be aware of the relativity of the power induced when one makes a choice. We must recognize the power within ourselves to set the world on fire by igniting whirlwinds of change.

During a trip to the new iHuman Youth Center on the day of its official opening, these claims proved themselves true.

iHuman Youth Society is a non-profit, charitable organization whose mission is to work with young people to promote their reintegration back into their communities. Coming from all sorts of backgrounds many of the youth have found themselves subject to physical abuse, drugs, alcohol, prostitution or in many cases a number of these things.

Tim Malladine, director of iHuman, lead a session thanking those who had contributed monetarily to the continuing success of the center, as well as welcoming the iHuman founder, Wallis Kendal, and those who's hearts are at the center of the vibrant iHuman community. Following the acknowledgements, the youth showed off their talents through a rap of reality on the streets, led us through some beats in "beat box" rap with sounds articulated straight from only the person's throat. The lyrics, beats and laughter were all so real, heart wrenching, and unforgettable.

What was especially inspiring about the afternoon was the support of local MLAs and the enthusiasm of Tim Malladine, combined with the expressed talent and courage of the youth at the society who opened up their home to strangers and were ever so welcoming.

iHuman has a lot of potential and can not ask for a better sense of community, and without a doubt has a large space to run its programs, but, as with any inner city agency, they desperately need more support money in order to realize the dreams for the center and for the youth.

iHuman truly is a grace. It is filled with the colorful talents of Edmonton's youth. Its shades are diverse, creative and cannot be matched. I encourage all who are involved with the arts or who have a curiosity to enjoy another's success to drop by and support iHuman. It is a blessing, full of attainable hope for the future and a painted picture of pure bliss.

**About iHuman Youth Society**

The iHuman story began several years ago when a group of young people approached artists Wallis Kendal and Sandra Bromley while they were working on a sculpture called The Art of Peacemaking: The Gun Sculpture. Prompted by Kendal and Bromley to create their own work, this group of young people began what was to ultimately become the iHuman Youth Society.

In September of 2005, and after four years of continuous support from Qualico in the form of a rent-free facility, it became evident that the building iHuman worked from would no longer be maintainable. The building was demolished late in 2005. After months on the street delivering services to youth, and through considerable effort and support from a great many people and organizations iHuman relocated to a new 8,500 sq. ft. facility in downtown Edmonton.

iHuman operates the iHuman Youth Centre as a harm reduction health facility offering crisis intervention and harm reduction support, mentorship through arts programs and long-term personal development support programs and services.

PHONE: (780) 440-9541 or FAX: (780) 450-9581 for more information on iHuman.

By Brittney White

# Game Aftermath

I was down on Whyte Avenue on game night when the Oilers beat the Ducks. After the game waves of fans crowded the streets giving high fives while shouting and cheering, passing cars honked, and police officers directed traffic. There were police everywhere, some in regular uniform, some wearing black clothes, officers on the rooftops and the eye in the sky circling overhead.

Before the game ended, I sat on a bench with Glen and Audrey Faithful who was taking a rest from pushing her cart full of bottles around. Two police officers stopped by to warn her to get the cart off Whyte before the game ended. "You could lose your bottles," one officer said. "The last game night someone had a cart and people threw the bottles around."

Audrey picked up a six pack, and we went to the park where I drank my coffee while the others drank beer from pop bottles, while keeping an eye out for police on bicycles. Audrey transferred all of her bottles into a big black garbage bag, and we started walking to the small shed she shares with another homeless woman for overnight shelter.

Loud cheering erupted on Whyte, so I knew the Oilers had won another game. Crossing the Avenue, we lost Glen as he joined the cheering fans. He had been selling papers all day, so his hands were ink-blackened, but there he was high-fiving fans who appeared oblivious to his dirty hands.

The alley south of Whyte was a sharp contrast to the street. A small group of homeless people stood beside their shopping carts laden with bottles and possessions. One asked, "Who won the game?" I had heard the score from a passerby, so was able to tell them, then I followed Audrey down the alley to the shed behind a restaurant where she made her home. The doors had been wired shut, but the wires had just enough stretch for her to squeeze through. Her roommate was already sitting on a sleeping bag on the floor, a duffel bag beside her.

Back on Whyte, I sat on the bus bench for a while just watching the people passing. An occasional fan came by and extended an arm for a high five. I complied, reluctantly, but the homeless man seated on the next bench completely ignored the gestures of goodwill.

Sitting there, I was reminded of nights in McCauley when there is a game on at Rexall Place. I live just a few blocks west of the Stadium and people stream through the neighbourhood, while for residents it's life as usual. Similarly, on games nights, while crowds of fans congregated on Whyte Avenue, for most of the homeless population life went on as usual, picking bottles, seeking shelter, seeking food, sharing smokes, drinking, selling papers, and panhandling.

As for Glen, the police gave him a ride home to get him off the Avenue

By Linda Dumont.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